1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

bags, recalling the typical checker and diagonal step design of Blackfoot beading. This type is, however, unusual among the Gros Ventre.

The fine bag shown in Fig. 6, collected by Dr. Clark Wissler, presents unusual quill-embroidery on its front, suggestive perhaps of Sioux influence or origin; but the bead-work on its cover and sides, and the attached tin and horsehair ornaments, are typically Arapaho, except for the fact that this tribe would be very unlikely to make any pattern without at least some proportion of white. The transverse lines of quill-work on this bag might be regarded as nothing but a further five-line development of the three-line grouping illustrated by the last figure, with an alternating bar-pattern for its chief ornamentation instead of the box figure, which in element is identical. The central figure, however, is the typical Sioux spider-web pattern described by Dr. Clark Wissler,[1] and so far without any parallel among either Arapaho or Gros Ventre, or any approach nearer than that shown in an instance of blanket painting.[2] The two parallel bars in the centre of this concave quadrilateral figure, and the diamond-shaped feather symbols at its corners, are also typically Siouan: only the last-named element is occasionally used by the Gros Ventre.

Buffalo paunches, the mouth being drawn up by a string, like a sack, were used for carrying and holding water, a paunchful being hung up in the tent. If buffalo had been killed, and it was desired to transport the meat across the Missouri, the paunches were filled with meat, blown up, tied together at the mouth, and floated. The well-known circular skin boats of the Missouri tribes were also used by the Gros Ventre for transporting clothing and property across streams.

Fig. 7 shows an ornamented food-bag of bladder. At the top is a strip of skin covered with red quill-embroidery, with square star designs in blue and white. From this strip of skin hangs a red quill-wound fringe. The thong handle of the bag is partly quilled, and has quilled thong pendants hanging from it. At the bottom of the bag a round piece of skin, covered with green-and-white quartered bead-work, is sewed on.

The navel-amulets of the Gros Ventre, which resemble those of the Arapaho in their use, are in form of a somewhat different type, as they approach more nearly to an animal's shape. They usually represent çaniwaⁿ, the "horned toad" (southern Arapaho, sâniwaⁿ, a "lizard"), or sometimes a person. Their general shape is, as everywhere on the Plains, a rhomboid on end. To this the Gros Ventre add at the upper end a small rhomboid, forming the head of the animal represented. This augmented shape has not been found among the Arapaho, with whom the typical form

[1] See Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part III, p. 248.
[2] Ibid., Vol. XVIII, p. 85, Fig. 138.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

727 counted coup on the enemy filled a pipe, and held it for the rest of the
[554] party to smoke as they stood in a row. The returning war-party, if
successful, always painted black, but if a member of their own party had
[302] been killed, they returned without rejoicing; unless sometimes, when the loss of the enemy had been greater than their own, and a relative of the dead was in the party, he might say, "One of the enemy pays for my relative. On account of the others, let us enjoy ourselves." Then the party would paint black, and celebrate. Wounds received by members of the war-party would not prevent celebration, unless, of course, they resulted fatally; and they were always regarded as an honor.

726 Some war-parties started off publicly in broad daylight, having made
727 it known that they were going; and any one who wished joined. Sometimes, perhaps, two men would agree to go, and invited such others to accompany them as they wished. Women not infrequently went with the war-parties. If a man was killed in war, his relatives, especially his parents,
[765] mourned for him. His father might go to the tent of a renowned warrior, and cry until this man became angry and announced a day for a party to start out to obtain revenge. On the day set, the party left publicly, usually
751 on horseback.
237 A man's supernatural war paraphernalia are shown in Figs. 27, 28, and
726 29. They were obtained from a middle-aged man who had them from his
778 grandfather, who first dreamed of the magpie and the other animals con-
293 nected with the paraphernalia, and made the objects. A cylindrical raw-
[787] hide case (Fig. 27), such as is found used for holding feathers and medicine among most Plains tribes, is painted with a yellow, green, and blue design
[531] resembling parfleche designs. These colors represent the various colors of the birds that were dreamed of by the original owner, and whose feathers are kept in the case. The case is called the "house" of these objects. A wing-bone is attached to the outside of the case to make another whistle from in case of loss of the finished whistle included in the outfit. A small bag containing a necklace is kept in the case. The bag (Fig. 28, *a*) is ornamented with bead-work representing a frog (kaka"). This frog was part of the original owner's dream. The necklace (Fig. 28, *b*) has various wasóo ("medicine-roots") on it. These are said to be neither eaten nor otherwise used, except as they are worn on the necklace. The bone whistle (Fig. 28, *c*) alluded to is attached to a necklace of otter-skin. It is blown during the fighting to prevent injury. A magpie's skin (Fig. 28, *d*) and the skin of a smaller bird (Fig. 29, *a*) are also contained in the case. The white magpie-feathers are dyed yellow. The two skins are worn at the back of the head, and prevent the wearer being injured even in a hand-to-hand fight. A head-dress of ten magpie-feathers and of a white plume on red-painted

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

237 726 293 778 751

thongs, tied together at the ends with a medicine-bag, and four brass bells (Fig. 29, *b*), is tied to the hair over the front of the head. When the warriors sing before dressing for battle, this head-dress is also used as a rattle. The medicine attached to it is chewed, and rubbed over the owner's body, as well

[531]

Fig. 27. (50-1952 a) Medicine-case for War Paraphernalia. Length, 40 cm.

as over his horse's, after he has painted himself. Two plumes of eagle-down (Fig. 29, *c*) are tied to the horse. One is tied to its fore-leg, the other to its tail. Then it will not be shot, and, if it falls, will not be hurt. In case of flight and pursuit, a little medicine that is attached to these plumes in a small

[text continues on p. 195]

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

[237]
293
726
751
778

bag is given to the horse to prevent its becoming exhausted. A cloth to wrap the various feathers and the whistle completes the outfit.

A warrior's outfit that was obtained for the Museum (specimen Museum No. 50–1862 a–c) consists of a beaded knife-scabbard, carried because the owner has cut loose horses that were tied by a rope leading into a tent; of a man's awl-case, carried presumably for mending moccasins and for

[237]

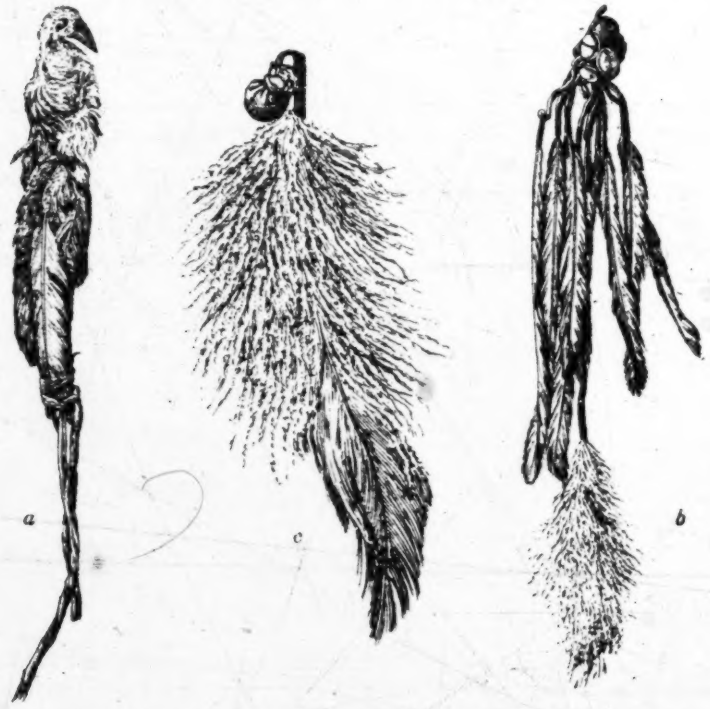

Fig. 29 (50–1952, f, g, h). War Paraphernalia. Lengths, 32 cm., 20 cm., 20 cm.

similar purposes; and of a piece of a scalp ornamented with beads, and worn attached to the shoulder of his shirt. The scabbard is ornamented with rectangular U-shaped bead-work designs similar to those in Fig. 3, and representing horse-tracks.

[787]

Sometimes in dreaming, a man saw a person in battle wearing the skin of a certain animal, and fighting very successfully. He would then wear the skin of that animal. Specimen Museum No. 50–1901 is a weasel-skin

l: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

796 171 The Gros Ventre also introduce into the ceremony a thunder symbolism that the Arapaho lack, or have in a much less developed form. The lightning symbol on the centre pole, from which water can be drawn, and the power of the thunder to strike with lightning any dancer who drinks other water than this, evidence this.

Another element special to the Gros Ventre is the introduction of ceremonies relating to war, such as the dramatic performances and the seeing of the approach of the enemy by the pledger.

Features introducing miraculous and sometimes purely personal supernatural powers are apparently quite lacking from the Arapaho ceremony. Among the Gros Ventre there are the raising of the centre pole, the production of water from the centre pole with the crow, the clairvoyance of the pledger as regards the enemy, and the visions of some of the dancers.

In summary, the exact duration and sequence of all events in the Gros Ventre ceremony are not yet clear; the preliminary prairie-chicken tent does not correspond very closely to the Arapaho rabbit-tent; and the connection of the ceremony with the thunder, the introduction of warlike elements, and that of miraculous or personal features, are peculiar, or nearly so, to the Gros Ventre as compared with the Arapaho.

MODERN CEREMONIAL OBJECTS.

778 171 The recent ceremonial objects of the Gros Ventre are somewhat different from those of the Arapaho. The Arapaho were deeply affected by the ghost-dance movement, more, it is said, than any other tribe; and many of their modern religious regalia have a distinct character of their own. [668 177] The Gros Ventre received the ghost-dance from the Arapaho, but it seems to have taken little hold of them. The only distinctive ghost-dance objects seen or obtained were two small hoops and a few balls, all of which resemble Arapaho types. 177 The chief modern dance-ceremony of the Gros Ventre, the only one performed at present, is the grass or war dance obtained from the Sioux, and evidently a modification of the widespread 778 796 Omaha dance upon which the Arapaho crow-dance is also based. This dance has in recent years been still further modified, until its character now is very similar to that of the crow-dance. The regalia used in this [178] dance at present are very individual, usually crude, and almost always stylistically degenerate. The delicate character and distinct style of the majority of modern Arapaho dance-objects are lacking.

171 778 The treatment of feathers in such objects is quite different among the Gros Ventre and Arapaho. The Gros Ventre rarely ornament their feathers

●237

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

with dyed plumes or tufts of horsehair, as the Arapaho so frequently do both at the base and top of the feather. Feathers with the vanes cut from the quill, except at the very top, are also scarcely used by the Gros Ventre. Instead, they usually cut the feather squarely off across its end, or split the quill, from the end down, for the greater part of its length. Sometimes the uppermost part of the quill is entirely removed, with its attached portions of the vanes, leaving the top of the feather forked. Plume-feathers are also much less used by the Gros Ventre than by the Arapaho. In dyeing, the Gros Ventre generally used cruder colors; a blue-violet, a pink-red, a light-bluish green, and yellow, all of them aniline colors, being the most common. The Arapaho use true red and green more frequently, and in most cases employ the dyes more lightly, thus obtaining endurable or delicate effects where the Gros Ventre are garish.

The Gros Ventre methods of feather-treatment, both the cutting-off and the splitting of the end of the feather, go back, at least in part, to their older tribal ceremonies. Both these processes are found employed on the dog-dance regalia described.

As regards other differences, the Gros Ventre probably employ more weasel-skin in ornaments than the Arapaho, though far less than their neighbors the Blackfeet. They use cloth (both cotton and woollen goods), red, green, or blue, without reluctance; whereas the Arapaho have clung very tenaciously to skin in all ceremonial objects. Skin thongs and sinew for binding are, however, very rarely replaced by strings and thread, even with the Gros Ventre.

The few objects obtained belonging to the ghost-dance movement are the following.

Fig. 41 shows an imitation of a netted playing-wheel. The piece is about two inches in diameter. The stitch of the meshes seems to be correct, though there are fewer meshes than in the full-sized wheels. The "crow," the centre mesh, is painted red; the rest of the thong, yellow. To the centre mesh are attached four magpie-feathers cut off across. This object was worn tied to the hair on the side of the head, or hanging from the little finger when the people joined hands to dance. Several very similar objects, lacking the feathers, are attached to the girl's painted dress shown in "Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History" (Vol. XVIII, Plate LXXV).

A head-dress consisting of a hoop of about the same size, quill-wound and bisected by two quill-wound strings, and of three long, blue-and-white quill-wound pendant thongs with plume-feathers at the ends, was collected by Dr. Clark Wissler. It is not known whether it belongs to the war-dance or the ghost-dance: its general similarity to certain Arapaho head-dresses

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

the stick is first covered with green cloth, then with skin covered with red and blue quill-work, and at the pointed end is bare, except for its red paint.

A feathered wheel a foot or a foot and a half across (specimen Museum No. 50–4292) is covered with red, blue, green, yellow, white, and black feathers and plumes, many of them dyed, and tied to the hoop without any attempt at color-pattern or other arrangement. Most of the feathers have the quill split.

Another hoop (specimen Museum No. 50–1745) is a little smaller, and is covered with brown buffalo-fur instead of feathers. At one point, five split owl-feathers and six black unsplit feathers are attached; at a place opposite, two small yellowed feathers, one with a green plume at the base.

Other specimens secured by Dr. Clark Wissler are a ceremonial spoon with long, thin, decorated handle, and a quirt. The latter (specimen Museum No. 50–4305) is similar to Arapaho ceremonial quirts.[1] A heavy wooden handle consists of two parts, — the handle proper and a longer portion with five deep notches in the lower edge. The upper edge is straight. The part of the handle that is notched is ornamented with brass tacks. From the end of the stick hang two ends of thong, the whip. At the handle is attached a skin of a fox or similar animal, ornamented with eagle-feathers.

A feather shield consists essentially of a circle of radiating feathers, worn on the back.

A crow-belt, also secured by Dr. Clark Wissler, is quite similar to the Arapaho one described in the "Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History" (Vol. XVIII, p. 345). It is interesting that of the five Arapaho pieces in the Museum, this is at once the crudest in construction, and the most perverted by white influence from aboriginal style. In the present Gros Ventre belt, a rectangular piece of rawhide is bent over a stick as a support for the remainder of the specimen. The two hanging "tail" strips are of yellow cloth, quite narrow, hanging apart. Eagle-feathers, some dyed red, are attached to them. The belt proper is formed by two pieces of woven yarn. In the middle of the piece are attached the head and breast of an eagle. Below this, between the two hanging strips, is an ornament of a row of eagle-feathers pointing downward. These are attached in the folded edge of a squarish piece of rawhide, thus resembling the analogous piece in the Arapaho crow-belt referred to and the Arapaho biitaha"wu head-dresses. The ornament, however, is fastened to the remainder of the piece, so that it cannot have been worn as a head-dress. The two usual projecting arms consist each of a black eagle-wing feather, with a strip of quill-embroidery laid along the quill of the feather, and with several small bells,

[1] Mooney, Ghost-Dance Religion (Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Vol. XIV, p. 987, Fig. 94), shows a very similar quirt attributed to the dog-dance.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

276 778 The sacred flat-pipe was also used in the sun-dance. It was once captured in war. Then the man who took it had bad dreams, until the pipe spoke to him in his dream and said, "Return me, or your tribe will be [728] destroyed." Then this man brought back the pipe, and his tribe made peace with the Gros Ventre.

343 782 The making of a sweat-house was not restricted to certain persons. A man wishing success in war would make a sweat-house for another person, in order that he might accomplish the deed he had in mind. Or, if a person was sick, one of his relatives might pledge to make a sweat-house for him, just as he would a dance. In this case the sick person himself would not necessarily use the sweat-house. On the other hand, a doctor might prescribe sweating for a patient, and in this case the sick person would enter the sweat-house.

[757]

343 515 [237]

Fig. 43 (50–4255). Sweat-house Tail. Length, 36 cm.

About twelve or fourteen willow poles were cut for the sweat-house. The entrance always faced the sunrise, and a small cottonwood-tree was erected in front of it. To this, calico or other property was tied by an old man as a gift to the sun. The cloth was partly blackened, the corners being rubbed with charcoal.

When all the participants were inside, the blankets were pulled down and the house closed tight. Water was poured on hot stones, at first five times. Thereupon the lodge was opened at the entrance and at the opposite west end, and the people cooled. It was then closed again, and this time water was poured on the rocks seven times. After cooling once more, water was poured on the rocks nine times. The fourth time, the man that poured the water could put as much or as little on the stones as [757] he wished. After the fourth time, the participants came out and bathed. If they were suffering from pain, they whipped that part of the body with buffalo or horse tails. This practice made the heat greatest at that point, much as if it were beaten into the body.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

343 757

A man who pledges and erects a sweat-house does not participate in the sweating. He makes the fire, heats the rocks and passes them into the house, raises and lowers the blankets, and performs other services.

[237]

In sweating, animal tails were sometimes used to beat the body with. Fig. 43 shows such an implement, made of the tail of a buffalo, on a stick handle cased in the skin of the tail. This object is similar to the Arapaho specimens described in the "Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History" (Vol. XVIII, p. 316), but is noticeable for the shortness of the hair on the tail.

343 757 776

When people were called to come to sweat, hixtcib'nix'a^{n}t ("Above-Nix'a^{n}t") was first called to sweat with them. Then the people were called. This personage, whose name also means "Above-white-man," is said to have been prayed to before the whites were known; but the Gros Ventre, like the Arapaho, state that they do not know whether he is identical with the Nix'a^{n}t of their myths. Ordinary prayers were always addressed first to hixtcib'nix'a^{n}t or to iiqanâ̂nin ("our father"), then the sun and moon would be mentioned, next the sacred pipes, and then the earth. After these had been mentioned, anything else could be prayed to.

[30]

778

A charm tied on horses to make them run fast consists of rabbit-feet painted red and tied together. The Arapaho used rabbits' feet for the same purpose.

Specimen Museum No. 50-1804 is a pair of wild-cat-tails worn by young men at the shoulder, or at the heel of a moccasin. They were also tied to children's belts, next to the skin, in order to keep them from wetting the bed.

[751]

Fig. 44 (50-4280). Thunder-stone Necklace. Length, 21 cm.

[39] 237

Specimen Museum No. 50-1903 is a gorget (commonly called by the Indians in English "moon-shell") said to have been made in the old way from an intervertebral disk of a buffalo. At present these objects are usually slightly concave, and are made of china.

The Gros Ventre, according to Dr. Clark Wissler, call certain corrugated fossil stones "thunder-stones."[A] The Assiniboine seem to use the same name. The Blackfeet, who perhaps have most developed the cult of these objects, call them "buffalo-stones." A specimen from the Northern Arapaho is shown in the "Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural

A [These are probably Ammonite septa. - Analyst]

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

237
292
796

Head-Dress for the Dog-Dance.

[End Plate 6]

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

successfully hunted than antelope. While the finest clothing was made from deer, elk was preferred for some purposes such as moccasins and warm shirts and coats—it being more durable but not equally as flexible.

For winter wear, caps and mittens of beaver or otter were made for men and boys. Beaver skin served as a breech clout for the men in winter, although antelope was preferred for this purpose the rest of the year, unless cloth were available, since the latter was more comfortable than hide which chafed the skin so badly.

Ordinarily unornamented clothing was worn, but for special events, particularly when the whole tribe was together, everyone dressed in his best. Being well-dressed was as important to the Gros Ventres as being well-mounted on ceremonial and social occasions. The effect on both the eye and the ear was taken into account in the ornamentation. Dyed porcupine quill embroidery lent color, and mica—first heated, then powdered and rubbed over a robe—glistened beautifully. Polished deer-hoofs as edging for a robe or dangling from leggings or garters "made such a nice sound when one walked." This feeling both for color and sound was carried over when material from the whites was at hand, beadwork tending to supplant the quill embroidery and scraps of bright colored cloth and of metal serving as "dangles." [18]

Elk teeth, however, were said to be "the greatest decoration of the Gros Ventres." They were used principally for girls' and women's dresses. Not so long ago there was a man at Hays who wore a vest trimmed with elk teeth, and people would say to him: "You crazy thing, only women have that kind of decoration!" But he was unconventional and would retort: "Well, I dance, too, and I want to look nice." Everyone would laugh, but he persisted in wearing that vest. Human hair as fringe and on moccasins was proudly worn by men who had taken scalps.

Mink, otter, weasel, muskrat and kit-fox were all used as trimmings, and occasionally the whole pelt of mink, otter or muskrat was made into a bag, or tobacco pouch, or other small container. Feathers, especially eagle feathers, were highly prized, and red

[18] For the detailed comparative analysis of Decorative Art of the Gros Ventres and other plains tribes, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 151–79.

Feathers, especially eagle feathers, were highly prized, and red paint, prepared from ochre, as well as other paints obtained through the trader, played their part in bodily decoration.

The younger men thought a great deal of their appearance. One of the things they made for themselves was fancy painted sunshade-hats of rawhide. The designs painted thereon had a yellow background against which various other colors stood out. Coming Daylight remarked: "These sunshades looked so fine that the other tribes copied them, just like the whites get their styles from Paris." Long thick hair was the ideal both for men and for women. The tail of the porcupine made an admirable comb. A number of perfumes were used by the young men. The castor of the beaver, for instance, was put in the paint bag so that the material for daily painting would be sweet smelling. Again, young men crushed "Piegan berries," chewed them, and rubbed them on hair, horses, and bedding, as perfume.

Incidentally, according to Coming Daylight, in order to clean their buckskin clothing, the Gros Ventres would wear it into the water, getting it completely wet, and then rub it thoroughly with a certain kind of white clay.[14] She said that the tribe was spoken of by other tribes as always having such nice white clothes, and to this habit of rubbing them with clay she attributes the name by which the Gros Ventres call themselves, *a'aninin*, "white clay people."

Ear-rings, worn both by men and women, were made from imported abalone shell, which they cut up and shaped; they also used a certain type of imported white shell. Many other kinds of necklaces, armlets, and so on were apparently used, but on these we failed to get details.

Household and Transportation

The lodges of the Gros Ventres were made from buffalo hides, the number used in each depending on the size of the lodge. They

[14] This custom is mentioned in the sources of the early 19th century. Cf. Harmon, p. 277; Henry, v. 2, p. 734. The latter adds, as a further distinguishing characteristic, that when the Gros Ventres use red "it is always of a light color, inclining to pale vermillion. The dark red or Spanish brown, so much in vogue among the other Meadow tribes, does not suit their taste."

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

342 were sewn together with sinew. The women selected the poles for the lodge, as well as for the travois, and were responsible for [484] erecting and taking down the lodge, for the arrangement of the interior, for the making of the travois, and for the packing and moving of impedimenta.

The foundation of three poles for the lodge was tied together and then raised as a unit. The other poles were arranged one by one, starting with those of the front. The cover of buffalo hides was tied to one pole, the "backbone," which was placed at the center-back, the cover then being drawn into place and fastened securely at the front, with small wooden pins usually made of cherry-tree wood. The ordinary Gros Ventre lodge stakes were shaped like a pin with a relatively small head. One informant, [184 however, stated that this form of stake often came loose where 177] the cover became taut with the wind, and that she had found the forked type, first observed by her many years ago when visiting another tribe to the south, far more satisfactory.

342 Old lodge covers were saved and cut up to make a sort of lining 353 at the bottom of the lodge in winter, and the snow scraped away to make place for the lodge was piled up on the outside thereof for extra warmth. In summer the ground inside the lodge was covered with willows, sagebrush or rye grass. Decorated robes as windbreaks were sometimes suspended in the lodge behind the fancy backrests, which were made by the women from slender willow rods. The women gathered and peeled the rods, although the young men helped straighten them by pulling them through their teeth. A willow ring encircled the fireplace and a broom of buckbrush was always kept handy. Personal belongings were neatly disposed against the wall of the lodge and in front of these were placed the skins which served as bedding by night and as seats by day. The painted parfleshes were given prominence to lend colorful touches. Dishes, utensils, and stored food were suspended 412 from poles well off the floor.

415 Among the articles of household equipment may be mentioned knives, both of bone and of metal, kettles, horn spoons, fleshing tools, etc., and food containers of various sorts. For the latter, [237] the membrane protecting the heart of the buffalo, the paunch, the bladder, and the intestines of the buffalo, as well as those of the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

elk and deer, served very well, and the first three were often used for carrying water. It was said that water kept cooler and fresher much longer in these than in other types of container such as those of metal.

Pottery had been made by the Gros Ventres in earlier times [18] but the only information we were able to gather thereon is contained in the following statements. Coming Daylight volunteered the most details: "They used some clay to boil their meat in. My grandmother worked it. She made a pot and told me how she did it. It was made of black mud of some kind. My grandmother took this mud and mixed some kind of grease or tallow with it and shaped the pot. While mixing the clay with the grease, she would shape it. It was smooth then. When finished it was about 18 in. high, 9 in. in diameter, the same at the top as at the bottom (straight-sided). The bottom was flat because it was put right on the fire and the coals were kind of heaped up around it when cooking with it. When my grandmother finished shaping it, she put it close to the camp fire and turned it around once in awhile so it would dry out. Then, when it was dry, she put water in it and put it on the fire to see whether it would crack. This pot didn't crack. I don't know what became of it. I never used it myself. It was undecorated. This one belonging to my grandmother is the only one I know the history of, and the only one in our family. We used the wooden dishes more than the pot. The pot was used only to cook in. Each family might have had one or two to cook in."

Singer, who was present when Coming Daylight told about this, said she had heard of such pots, but had never used one herself. Mary Ereaux, the interpreter, commented, "In the Missouri River where they are making the dam, the mud taken out of the River, when it dries, is just like cement." When asked regarding pottery, Charles Buckman stated that he doubted that the Missouri River mud could have been used for this purpose. There is a blue clay near Hays that would be suitable for making pots—he had heard that pots were used "in the old days" but did not know how they

[18] Cocking, in 1772, writes of the Gros Ventres, p. 111: "Victuals are dressed in earthen pots of their own manufacturing much in the same form as Newcastle pots, but without feet."

The older women in informants described, when they were young, they would work at scraping skins pegged to the ground, by leaning over from the waist, feet well apart and knees unbent, swinging sideways from the hips. They could keep up this rhythmical steady motion, with the short-handled scraper usually tipped with metal, for hours at a time, one day after another. Sometimes, too, a woman would spend a whole day softening ropes of rawhide by rubbing the rope which had been run through the eye and ear apertures of a buffalo skull upon which the horns had been left so that she, sitting on the ground with legs extended, could rest her feet against the horns as she pulled the rope back and forth, making it soft and white.[4] Nevertheless the tedium of these operations was often relieved by the fact that occasionally other women, who had at the moment some leisure, would hear the work going on and would volunteer to help.

It was customary for women to do much of their work in groups. If a young woman, for instance, wished to make a fine robe, she would call in some other women, including an older experienced "hand." The latter would mark the robe where the embroidery should go, and the younger women did the fancy work. The hostess would cook for all present and so, in a pleasant atmosphere of sociability and "woman talk," the work would progress. A similar type of gathering would be held when a sufficient number of hides had been saved to make a lodge cover.

In size the lodges ranged from six skins up to twenty-four or twenty-five, with the average of about fourteen to seventeen.[5] Much skill was needed for cutting and fitting the skins and an experienced woman would be called in to do that part, while the others helped with the task of sewing the skins together. Our informants stated that a woman would have to "save and save" skins towards a new lodge, which was a necessity about every three years.

Women went out in groups to pick berries and wild fruits as well as to dig roots, but each one had right of disposal over what

[4] Another method for softening ropes is given by Kroeber, 1908, p. 150.

[5] The largest lodge remembered by the Gros Ventres is said to have been that of the Blood Chief, Father of All, who had, at the time of the 1855 treaty, a lodge with two fires, poles 65 ft. long, and the cover consisting of more than 25 skins.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

value. Thus any object captured from the enemy, no matter how trivial it might be, was more valuable than a duplicate of that same thing obtained in any other way, and could be used to initiate an enemy-friendship, one of the most important of Gros Ventre transactions. A man who gave a horse, rather than or in addition to other items—to establish the enemy-friendship, to pay for the curing of a relative, to someone in honor of his relative, to his ceremonial grandfather for guiding him through the Sacred Dance, to wager in gambling, to show how much he thought of his brother-in-law in return for so simple a gift as the flesh of a puppy—would gain in prestige, for he thus established for himself a reputation for "being somebody."

The amount of labor that went into the making of an object, such as the polished deer-hoof trimming on a robe, was an element in its value. When the robe was old and worn the recipient thereof would remove the fringe and return to the donor "so she could use them again." Scarcity, too, entered into evaluation of goods. Eagle feathers were, for instance, more valuable than other kinds of feathers. Again, as to elk teeth, it was explained: "The elk has only two teeth that are like ivory,[11] and so it takes a long time to accumulate them. They are to us Gros Ventres like pearls are to the whites. They were our greatest decoration. They are valuable even today, and, while imitations are sometimes used, you can always tell the difference."

Exchange and Distribution

There was actually no need for economic exchange within the tribe, with the object of obtaining the necessities of life, but a need had developed for exchange with the fur traders to obtain guns, whiskey, metal objects—kettles, scraper-blades, etc.—cloth, tobacco, beads, paints, and so on. After about 1830, the medium of exchange with traders was the buffalo robe, which rapidly increased in value at the expense of beaver.[12] Traders on the Missouri accepted other items produced by the Indians, but everything was equated in terms of robes.[13]

[11] These are the rudimentary canines. Cf. Seton, v. 3, p. 5.

[12] Bradley, pp. 203–04.

[13] According to Denig, p. 421, an Assiniboine chief on Jan. 8, 1852, was

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

593 infant. Some siblings, for example, would try to plug the infant's mouth with a rag or some other object. An occasional child would be unusually jealous and resent all younger siblings. One of Coming Daylight's own boys was like that. He would try persistently to get ahead of his little brother. The mother would be lying down with the infant at her side, and this little boy would try to snuggle in between her and the infant. He stuck close to her and wanted to accompany her everywhere, even when she left the lodge at night to attend to her necessities,— and this was after he was old enough to know he should not follow her at such a time. One of Cora's children was like that at the time the information was being gathered, jealous of the other children in the family and following her everywhere.

853 One of the first solid foods a baby was fed was a ball of cooked rose-berries mixed with grease. This was put on the end of a stick in lollypop fashion. Marrow, guts and rose-berry soup were considered the best food for growing, healthy children.

854 A newborn infant is called a "sack-baby." The sack was made of fine buckskin, or of buffalo calfskin with the fur left on one side, and was laced up the front. It was made just the same way for a girl as for a boy. A piece of rawhide was put inside the sack to stiffen it, and some rags were placed between it and the child's body to stuff it up and prevent chafing. The board was rectangular, rounded at the top, and reached only to the baby's neck. They made a little round cap out of calfskin, with little fur earmuffs that tied under the chin. They used to decorate their baby sacks nicely and sewed little deerhoofs thereon,—"They liked to have something rattle on their clothing."

When placing the infant in the sack they were very careful that its feet and legs should be properly placed. Singer remarked that in the old days everybody's legs were nice and straight and that it is only these "diaper babies" around here now who are bow-legged.

854 278 237 Small children, including infants, were washed each morning, —in winter rubbed with snow,—and then powdered. As a powder, buffalo chips were pounded on rawhide and then, "to sort of sterilize," hot stones were placed thereon. When the powdered chips were warmed, but not too hot, the stones were removed and the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

has been given up, the Gros Ventres are so sunburned that their skin looks almost "black." Singer showed a small bag of red paint which she still had. She kept a piece of beaver castor in the bag so the paint would be sweet-smelling.

In the old days the Gros Ventres were early risers. Everyone got up while it was still dark, perhaps about three o'clock in summer and before seven in winter. It didn't make any difference whether a child might otherwise be favored, the rule was iron-clad that all must rise early and that no one should lie abed. This applied to all—old people as well as to children.

One method of making sure that children would be strong was to take a beaver tail and slap the child on the hand and on the back while saying: "You will be good and strong." Mary, for instance, has seen her mother do this to all her grandchildren, hitting them so hard they almost cried. The beaver is considered a very strong animal since he cuts down big trees and drags them about.

Naming and Ear-piercing

Every individaul received a name shortly after birth. Many Gros Ventres, however, were, and are, known by names other than the original one. Names were changed for particular reasons, and in addition nicknames were frequently employed. Sometimes the first name was bestowed with considerable formality, but naming could be carried out in a variety of ways,[10] as the following examples show.

"Shortly after Coming Daylight was born, her father sent for his sister's husband and told him: 'Now I invited you to name your niece. I am giving you such-and-such kind of horse' (a bay, or a pinto, or whatnot). There was a big feast on this occasion and the lodge was full of people. The namer sat in the place of honor at the back of the lodge. He held the infant in his arms, told a war deed and said: 'Now I name her 'Taken A Prisoner.' Then he said a long prayer, starting with the usual formula, and wishing the infant a long life. He then handed the infant to the person to his left saying: 'Take Taken A Prisoner'; and so the infant was passed all around the lodge, each repeating the same to

[10] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 182.

ciency with the overhand stroke and girls with the breast stroke.[1] Sometimes the children amused themselves by rolling down the bank so that their bodies made a loud smack as they hit the water. At other times they held contests to see who could dive and stay under the longest time, or who could make the biggest bubble by exhaling under water. Follow-the-leader was played even in big rivers like the Missouri, but only the more courageous participated in this game. The one who had the reputation as bravest was the leader, and Coming Daylight claimed that she, herself, often led off, one of her accomplishments being the ability to swim quite far under water.

There was no adult supervision of children at play and they spent much time at the water's edge, even when not intending to swim. Modelling in clay was done by boys as well as by girls. The latter liked especially to form wet clay into "parfleches" and incise marks to represent beaded and painted designs.

Walking on stilts, teetering on logs, swinging by standing in a loop of rawhide, all were considered enjoyable activities for little girls. Nevertheless some of their games were quite rough and-tumble. In one such game, girls formed a circle, each pinching the flesh on the back of her neighbor's left hand; while standing thus they sang a song which was repeated as many times as necessary until someone let go of her neighbor's hand; whereupon this girl was jumped on and mauled by all the others. In another game, one girl, with her eyes closed, would try to find the others who were seated in a row on the ground. Different ones would call out: "This way! This way!" Each was anxious to be the first discovered. As soon as the girl who was "it" touched one of the others, she picked her up and, carrying her upside-down on her back to the spot from which she had originally started, she dumped her burden on the ground. This procedure was repeated until "it" had carried each girl, but the last one to be dumped was tickled unmercifully by all the others.

Girls played with two kinds of balls. One type was of buckskin stuffed with deer-hair. This they would toss to one another. The other type of ball was large and made from the bladder of a buffalo cow, dried and stuffed.

[1] The marked ability of the Gros Ventres in swimming was noted in 1833 by Maximilian, p. 72.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

539 773 he came out of the cave. As soon as the mother saw Blood-Clot she took wing and sailed into the air. There was a blinding flash of lightning and this was the last thing that Blood-Clot remembered. When he came to he found himself at the base of the mountain with his hair all singed up. He then collected himself and went back up to the top of the mountain. All this,—the flash of lightning, the becoming unconscious, finding himself at the base of the mountain, climbing it again,—took place four different times. The last time that Blood-Clot climbed the mountain he twisted the beaks of the young birds and taunted them with the words: "Tell your mother about this."

The next time, however, a big, black cloud appeared and came to the mountain. The father of the birds came. So soon as the father saw Blood-Clot there was a flash of lightning but after it Blood-Clot still stood there and said to the father: "You can't do anything with me. You can't kill me. You better leave me alone. It is useless for you to shoot at me. I will show you how powerful I am."

So Blood-Clot took an arrow and mounted it and shot at a big, flat stone on top of the mountain. The arrow pierced the stone and was buried in it, all but a bit of it that stuck out. "Look at that arrow there," said Blood-Clot to the father bird. "If you can pull it out from that rock then you can do something to me that will harm me. If you can't pull it out then it is useless for you, as I told you, to try to harm me." "All right," said the father. "I can do that. That is easy." So the bird sailed up in the air. As he did so, a flash of lightning struck at this rock. Then he tried to get hold of the arrow and pull it out. He took hold and flew up to pull it out and the arrow stretched and as it contracted it pulled the bird back as the father was caught fast by it.[16] Blood-Clot saw that the bills and feet of the father thunderbird and the other thunderbirds were of buffalo neck tendon. Thus Blood-Clot trapped the father. But he released the father saying to him: "Here is how powerful I am." And with that he pulled the arrow out with ease. Then he said to the bird: "Leave me alone. You can't do anything with me."

After that he came down from the mountain, went back home and told his wives what had happened. "No wonder," he said, "your father kills off the young men as he does. Tell your father that those birds up there could not do anything with me. You probably heard the thunder and lightning and disturbance up there while I was away. The birds were trying to kill me but they did not succeed." The girls then went back and told their father

237 283

[16] Blood-Clot's arrow, The Boy explained, was made of buffalo tendon from the upper neck of the animal—the tendon that holds the neck to the body. This is very tough and stretches like rubber when it is taken out. This tendon had many uses, for instance, for mending the broken handle of a knife. When it was wrapped around anything it was stretched as much as possible and when it dried it held very tightly. The travois basket was tied on with the same tendon.